

MTAC Focus Group Session Notes

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Gary Reblin, USPS VP-New Products and Innovation
Steve Colella, MTAC Industry Leader, Mailpiece Design/Product Development

Session 1: PERIODICALS

(John Stark, MTAC Industry Leader)

Gary welcomed all and introduced Elena Neely as his new Manager, Mailing Services.

Pulse of the Industry

John Stark provided:

Advertising

- print ad pages down 4% in first quarter
- B2B print ad pages down 4.4%, account for 26% of revenue, digital ad revenue is 19% and events are 45% of total revenue

Increased focus on publishers creating video content

- Meredith grew video content 35% in 2013 and both Conde Nast and Time Inc announced new video platforms
- Key point is that content is “king” and video expansion will not be at expense of print

Business news

- Meredith 1st quarter magazine revenue down 5%
- Time Inc 1st quarter revenue up 1%
- Quad/Graphics announced purchase of Brown Printing

Circulation/New Launches/Shutdowns

- Mr. Magazine reported 61 new titles in 1st quarter vs. 56 prior year
- Dr. Oz magazine sold out first issue on newsstand and Hearst went back to press
- Ladies Home Journal shut down after 131 years (Randy Stumbo said 47% of Ladies Home Journal cost was postage)
- Sesame Street now back

Renewed industry interest in alternate delivery

- Especially due to the exigent price increase
- Dennis Farley stressed Periodicals are the anchor of the mailbox and he feels the Postal Service is not appreciating this fact with recent developments (exigent price increase again)
- More interest in product samples per John Stark and Brian Schmitt of Hearst said a lot of interest in putting samples in poly
- Jack Widener observed that special interest publications are doing well (Newsweek is doing this with much success)
- Dennis Farley said ESPN The Magazine is looking at going direct to retail chains like Barnes & Noble and said this would be opportunity for working with the Postal Service. Gary Reblin and Steve Colella agreed this should be an action item “Direct to Retail Firm Bundle Mailing Pallets to Wholesalers.”

Updated: __5/28/14__

- The majority of ESPN The Magazine renewals now come from their website (Dennis Farley-ESPN)
- Jerry Faust said Time Inc is having serious problems with the current 250 LB. minimum FSS pallet requirement and Gary said it was important to bring this up in Dave Williams Mail Prep and Entry / Operations MTAC Focus meeting today. Gary also noted our engineers are working on this issue with RR Donnelley and Quad Graphics to seek solutions. Gary said Pricing is also looking at this and Gary will want this as an action item.

Gary Reblin reviewed Periodicals total mail volumes FY 2014 YTD

The downward trend is troubling (down 7.8% for 1st Quarter and this is the largest drop since 2010 according to Jack Widener – he feels that the exigency price increase is part of the cause for this). Jon Leon said he will look further at data for Periodicals for analysis to confirm what is going on. Gary Reblin said this will be an action item for the next MTAC meeting.

PAG Initiatives

- John Stark reported on progress being made at PAG on the following:
 - Coupon value-5%
 - Eliminating marked copy requirement-PCSC reviewing recommendations send to them.
 - Marking interactive links within Edit pages
 - Recommendations and next steps from WG 158 on 3510/3526 forms
 - Implementing new air box requirements in January (now supposed to be ready in October). Chuck Tricamo to provide exceptions
 - Review USPS tests of 24 oz. flats on automation-
 - Combining Periodicals Publications-new MTAC group-issue with PostalOne! charging incorrectly- this is now a separate workgroup # 162. Presently handling manually
 - Product Samples in Periodicals
 - Flats PARS

Gary Reblin Provided a 2014 promotion Update

- **Earned Value Promotion**
 - 574 customers enrolled
 - Counting reply mail pieces April 1 through June 30
 - Credits will be released after August 24
 - Extending expiration date-due to July release being pushed to August. Want to release the credit after the software release so extending from December 31 at least a month. Final decision not made.
- **Premium Advertising Promotion**

Updated: __5/28/14__

- 19 customers enrolled (registration is still open). USPS invited only 138 customers (to qualify had to mail over 6MM pieces in prior year) to become eligible so not disappointed in participation level.
- Promotion Period: April 1 – June 30
- Participants who plan to send commingled mail need to contact the program office: PremiumAdMail@usps.gov
- **Color in First-Class Mail Transactions Promotion**
 - Receiving samples for review from mailers
 - Registration begins: June 15
 - Program Period: August 1 – December 31
- **Mail and Digital Personalization Promotion**
 - Registration opened March 15 Promotion began May 1
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 - Recorded webinar is available on RIBBS
- **Emerging Technology Promotion**
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- **Mail Drives Mobile Commerce Promotion**
 - Registration opens September 15

Gary Reblin reviewed 2015 promotion ideas

- **Evaluation Criteria**
 - Strategic benefits
 - Level of innovation
 - Volume retention
 - Cost to USPS
 - Cost to mailers
 - Ability to implement

Current List of Promotion Ideas

- First-Class Mail Fundraising Promotion
 - Encourages participants to use First-Class Mail for their fundraising activities
- First-Class Mail Color/Transpromo Promotion
 - Continue to grow the value of First-Class Mail and encourage mailers to invest in color print technology for bills/statements
- Alternate Postage Promotion
 - Build awareness and stimulate usage of one of our newest and most exciting products-shared mail pieces allowing a third party to pay postage-Hallmark did this. Postage paid by third party when piece is mailed.
- Holiday Mobile Shopping
 - Demonstrate how direct mail, combined with mobile technology, continues to be convenient method for consumers to do their shopping.
- Mail and Mobile Technology Integration

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Promotes use of mobile print technology that allows a recipient to either download an app or ties into a rewards/loyalty program.
- Earned Value
 - Slow the decline of First-Class Mail (BRM and CRFM) pieces through a postage credit for each returned mail piece
- Advanced or Emerging Technologies Promotion
 - Encourage the use of “enhanced” augmented reality or standard NFC technology in mailing campaigns.
- Catalogs Drive Action Promotion
 - Use finding from catalog innovation study to encourage mailers to use multi-channel marketing and enhancements that demonstrate power of direct mail to drive consumer action

ACTION ITEMS

- **USPS to explore possible new service(s) for publications to mail directly to retail outlets as FirmBundles, and / or deliver pallets directly to wholesalers.**
- **Gary Reblin agreed to work with USPS Pricing to explore / become more familiar with the 250 LB. minimum FSS pallet requirement issue**
- **USPS to review trending data to determine specific reasons for Periodical volume drops and Jon Leon (at request of Gary Reblin) will review this at the next MTAC meeting.**
- **Gary Reblin agreed to explore the opportunity to tie the Earned Value Credit Promotion to Periodicals**

Session 2: STANDARD MAIL

(Wanda Senne, MTAC Industry Leader)

Gary Reblin welcomed all

Pulse of the Industry - Wanda Senne:

- USPS decided not to follow PRC recommendations regarding eliminating work share incidents.
- Comingle/Comail BPM with Standard Flats and Periodicals

Gary Reblin reviewed Standard Mail volume trends

YTD 2014 trend is positive overall except for flats:

- Down 3% QTR 1 but up 1% QTR 2 over SPLY - overall growing slightly up 5 .9% - five of last six QTRS volume is up.
- High Density and Saturation up 6% QTR 1 and 4.9 % QTR 2
- HD for Flats was down 2.9% in QTR 1 and up .8% in QTR 2
- Carrier Route down 15.7% in QR 1 and up 1.5% QTR 2
- Flats down 10.8% in QTR 1 and 8.8% in QTR 2
- Letters up .6% in QTR 1 and up .9% in QTR 2

Gary provided a Catalog Mailing Industry Update

- Shoppers spend up to 15 – 20 minutes with a catalog
- More catalogs are tailored to individuals
- Some 20% of the website's first-time customers are placing their order after having received a catalog
- Shoppers driven to websites by catalogs spend 1.5 times as much as new shoppers who did not receive a catalog first
- People like receiving print catalogs. The DMA 2012 Fact Book found that 77% of those who receive catalogs consider them to be useful or interesting
- Pitney Bowes study found 66% of people would rather get a catalog by mail than email

Bob Rosser of IWCO Direct said the USPS needs to work with the industry to lower the cost of flats and Gary agreed and he will work with his peers to do this. Gary asked the industry to provide ideas on ways we can work to provide incentives to make this happen.

Elena Neely offered all the opportunity to participate in meetings she is holding to look at possibility of creating a new 'prospecting' rate for catalogers. One meeting has been held. Anyone interested should give Elena their card and she will send them information regarding the next meeting.

Incentives and Promotions

- **2014 Saturation & High Density**
 - 391 registrants completed the certification process
 - Q1 Actual Volume exceeded projections by 35%

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Q2 Progress report to be sent mid-July

2014 Promotions Update

- Mobilebarcode@usps.gov will become mailingpromotions@usps.gov
- MTAC User Group #8 last meeting was April 21, 2014. Discussed potential CY 2015 promotions and notes are on RIBBS
- Next meeting will be June 10, 2014
- **Branded Color Mobile Technology Promotion**
 - Over 350 participants
 - Over 2.5 billion pieces
 - Total discount: Nearly \$12 million
 - Seeking anecdotal information about participant experience with color mobile barcodes
 - Survey to be sent in the next two weeks.
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- **Open Discussion:**

- Gary Reblin stressed that the 2015 promotion list are just ideas and not all will make cut. Gary encourages all members to attend USPS Promotions User Group # 8 to express their feedback for specific ideas as this will help guide USPS in making final decisions
- Kurt Ruppel requested USPS to comment on what the industry can expect in 2015 pricing and Steve Monteith addressed the question
 - Not sure how exigent case will work out as it depends on current court cases and their resolution

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Not sure how USPS will pull exigent case increase if need to do. This may delay rate implementation in January 2015 since if exigent case pull out takes place that would happen in July
- USPS may be more aggressive in FSS discounts to encourage more participation; same with facility pallet; also looking at BPM at FSS sites
- If increase in January CAP would be in low 1% rate range
- Wanda Senne asked about Commingle/Copal issue with BPM; Steve Monteith said USPS not opposed however near term major cost involved in changing PostalOne! USPS may not have money to do that. USPS will need to look at possible cost savings this would provide
- Rose Flanagan requested all to bring any new ideas to the USPS Promotion Users Group # 8 on June 10 as this will be important for 2016 promotion planning as well as 2015

ACTION ITEMS

- Gary Reblin and Steve Colella agreed with Craig Bjork's suggestion to add to the survey a question regarding timing of the Earned Value Promotion for 2015 and ascertain if it would be better to do in a different timeframe.
- Gary Reblin agreed to consider that all Standard Mail be eligible for the 2015 Catalog Drive Action promotion.

Session 3: PACKAGE SERVICES

(John Medeiros, MTAC Industry Leader)

Gary Reblin welcomed all and had all introduce themselves.

Pulse of the Industry:

John Medeiros provided:

- Kudos to USPS for excellent progress with tracking data
- Issue with packages getting hit with noncompliance fees because USPS doesn't receive the Shipping Services files with the addresses before pieces are scanned. Industry working with USPS on this issue and has recommendation on how to solve
 - Gary said USPS will offer new services down the road and having timely file information will be important so that is part of the USPS concern at this point in time
- John Medeiros said text tracking possible on smart phones is a big deal for packages and Gary said there will be a USPS commercial later this year that will support efforts by USPS.

Return Address in Shipping Services File

- Karen Key introduced the USPS folks working on Packages and Randy Root from USPS Engineering showed the internal USPS 56965 label which USPS is exploring in the hopes it will reduce the cost of processing, return to sender, etc. APPS, APBS and NDC sorting equipment will be programmed to recognize the 56965 barcode
- The internal launch of this will be September 2014
- John Medeiros said he thought this might be a good MTAC work group
- The original barcode will still be used with the mailpiece
- Wendy Smith agreed it should be an MTAC work group
- Karen Key reviewed the steps involved to test this and will work with mailers to obtain external customers for testing
- Richard Porras said we will all need to work together to make it work right (if there are two addresses this could cause misdelivery of the package, etc.)

Claims

- Karen reviewed the business customer claims process.
 - Objective is to streamline the process, improve status updates, reduce cost and improve turnaround time.
 - Proposals to create options:
 - Bulk file upload
 - API (xml)
 - Webpage
 - Credit
 - USPS corporate Account
 - Caps Account
 - Electronic Funds Transfer

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Karen requested customer participation for those interested by emailing ShippingServices@usps.gov and let USPS know. Have requested feedback on customer needs, features and requirements.

Extra Services

- Have too many. Presently 16 and want to streamline for truly value added services
 - Step 1
 - Eliminate Return Receipt for Merchandise
 - Combine duplicate domestic insurance tables
 - Improve visibility for Registered Mail
 - Step 2
 - Deep dive into usage of all existing extra services
 - Eliminate redundant services
 - Incorporate feature into base products
- Requesting customer participation and feedback on needs, features, and requirements. If interested in participating email ShippingServices@usps.gov.

IMpb Webinars

- Have held 3 to date (5 more scheduled by October)

Postal Use Only

- The origin Postal Use only section is being removed from the 4 x 6 Online and commercial Priority Mail Express labels
 - To free up real estate to add more valuable endorsements
 - Ensure acceptance scans are performed on all Priority Mail Express to capture data for claims
 - Mailers now able to print information near bottom of the label

Hold For Pickup Label

- Redesigned label for ease of use
- Eliminate recipient address from label

Merchant Returns Cloud Tool

- Tool enables the merchant's customer or the merchant call center
- Now Operations Integration Specialist can assist with onboarding for Merchandise Return Service labels.

Proposal for Shipping Products and Services

Updated: __5/28/14__

Returns Shipping Products – Karen reviewed eight of them and changes being made

Call Tag Return Service

- Sign up for service thru BCG/Customer Registration

Three label receipt options

1. Deliver to customer
2. Customer pickup from local post office
3. Pickup from self-service kiosk

Return item has two options:

1. Returned to Store
2. Return to distribution center

- Physical scan triggers payment of postage for USPS Returns
- Instructions on labels
- Create external Guide
- **Ground Return service**
Charge the parcel select non presort rate for scan base payment Postal Bulletin May 2014

Package Intercept

- Available thru Click-N-Ship
- Create API
- Change scan event from Recall to Intercepted
- Change search period to 7 days
- Charge customer upon successful intercept

Electronic Authorize Shipment Release

Automate Premium Forwarding Service Commercial

Mail Manager Redelivery

- Email or text address in shipping services file
- Direct customer to usps.com for options for redelivery
 - Options:
 - Deliver to a neighbor
 - Deliver to a new domestic address
 - Schedule redelivery
 - Hold at post office for customer pickup
 - Request electronic authorize shipment release

eSignature on File

- Sign up for service on USPS.com or triggered through attempt scan event

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Allow for Priority Mail Express insurance >\$200 and Signature confirmation
- Improve First Delivery

Pickup Services

Add three additional services effective July 2014

Next Meeting Agenda

- Gary said he gets input for agenda items from John Medeiros but we want to ask for thoughts on what other agenda items should be included going forward (John explained some package MTAC participants are competitors so we don't always get the agenda items needed from everyone).
- Wendy Smith said mail owner does not attend user groups and usually gets information from John Medeiros
- Communications is the key and Karen Key will assist in improving.

Pricing:

- Steve Monteith responded to pricing questions. He said we are looking at all issues and this is not a normal pricing process due to all the unknowns (possible postal legislation, currently unknown legal court outcomes for exigent options, etc.)
- Gary clarified in past we had price changes each January and now with all the issues around exigency, etc. we might have to consider changing the normal pricing scenario in terms of timing. Competitive and market dominant pricing issues may be considered separately since they do not have the same issues involved
- Pricing could be an agenda topic for August MTAC
- Jessica Lowrance mentioned that the flats strategy group had discussed merging of bound printed matter flats into Standard Mail flats.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Gary Reblin agreed to include on the August MTAC Agenda an Update on Pricing implementation timing and explore the possibility of Bound Printed Matter flats being melded into Standard Mail (for flats).**

Session 4: FIRST-CLASS MAIL

(Sharon Harrison, MTAC Industry Leader)

Gary Reblin welcomed all and invited introductions

Pulse of the Industry

Sharon Harrison:

- Sharon said she provides the pulse in writing to the industry prior to this meeting and yielded her oral review of this to conserve time. She asked if the Postal Service also uses it. Gary Reblin said he will develop a distribution list so we can ensure all Postal Service folks see all four pulse reports prior to each quarterly MTAC meeting
- First-Class Mail Volume FY 2014 YTD was reviewed by Gary Reblin
 - Presort trending in area of 4% decrease. It is a little ahead of plan.
 - February and March for single piece is about breakeven.
 - Remittance mail from consumers is still dropping
- Sharon Harrison said the industry is having a problem reconciling postage for the USPS blended price for single piece residual letters and meter price
 - Postal Service implemented blended price for residual letters and meter price in January 2014
 - Residuals:
 - 1 oz and 2 oz prices or
 - Blended rate for pieces up to 2 oz

Meter price for all FCM single piece letters (includes all residuals and commercial stand alone mailings). Meter price not available for single piece letters with postage stamps

Part of issue is due to using blended rather than sorting the 1 oz and 2 oz pieces. Sharon suggests make two rates - commercial rate and retail rate. Gary said we need to simplify this

Alternative Postage Update - Gary provided an update on Alternate Postage creating a new opportunity for the mail

Market push out May 15

Highlights:

- Unique mailing product limited only by your creativity
- Using IMb technology to collect postage
- Picture Permit Indicia included free of charge
- Postage maybe partially prefunded or paid in full at time of mailing

Possible Opportunities:

- Automotive-referral and loyalty program

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Entertainment and Travel-postcards sold at tourist destinations
- Franchises-Promotions and referrals
- Healthcare Affordable Care Act
- Retail-Greeting Cards and Gift cards sold at retail

More information at alternatepostage@usps.gov

Value of Hardcopy Mail Study (First-Class Mail Billing Study)

- Gary covered the purpose of this study and said John Huffman is the USPS lead for this and he is inviting participants.
- At the March 2014 National Postal Forum the Postmaster General cited a study done in the Netherlands about true cost to send out electronic billing statements. They found when considering all costs involved mail was actually less expensive and more effective. The Postal Service now wants to do their own study and Gary said those interested in participating can contact him or Sharon Harrison or ideally John Huffman (John's email is john.p.huffman@usps.gov).

It was suggested and agreed upon that a "brochure" should be made available to give prospective participants so they will know the benefits and requirements for participating in this study.

Incentives and Promotions

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Discussion followed on how best to better communicate to get more First-Class Mail participants involved in USPS promotions. Gary said let's see if the promotion designed for First-Class Mail alone will get better participation. He is confident it will do well. Sharon Harrison asked if First-Class mailers here will be participating and a good number said they will.

Steve Brocker recommended that the USPS provide an additional incentive for any company which participates in a promotion – if they are willing to also agree upfront to provide testimony afterward - to highlight success and share with others later so they could benefit by participating as well

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She asked the Postal Service to open as many promotions as possible to First-Class Mailers – the Holiday Mobile Shopping Promotion was mentioned as First-Class Mailers were excluded from this promotion this past year.

Gary asked for Sharon and the industry to provide more input and to let us know which promotions will be of special interest to First-Class Mail companies - and the Postal Service will try to include them wherever possible.

Pricing

Steve Monteith joined the meeting and Sharon Harrison asked Steve about single piece First-Class Mail residual reconciliation problems and asked if the Postal Service can provide a plan to resolve this.

- Since January Steve said we are now seeing data and he will need to get back on how we can best help them to provide a solution. Sharon said it is an extremely complicated rate. Gary said there is a need for simplification in time for the next rate filing. Sharon asked for a plan to provide simplification and she feels retail and commercial needs to be separated.

Updated: __5/28/14__

- Sharon Harrison said she will provide input to Elke Reuning-Elliott who will involve the right people going forward including Steve Monteith.

ACTION ITEMS

- Gary Reblin agreed to create an internal distribution list to provide the quarterly Industry pulse reports for all four classes prior to each MTAC meeting.
- For Value of Hardcopy Mail study Gary Reblin agreed to provide a “brochure” outlining the requirements and benefits for participating companies.